

1979 four House Crows were watched in a fresh-water marsh about 200m inland from the beach feeding around the feet of cattle, together with Cattle Egrets. The crows also perched on the backs of adult cattle and calves and one crow was seen to lean over and peck for some seconds around the perineal region of a calf, probably picking off ticks clustered there.

Goodwin noted that food storing has been observed in captive Pied and Indian House Crows, and suggested that it occurs in all corvids in the wild. Since August 1979 Pied Crows have been seen on at least three occasions at Kunduchi burying scraps of food in sand below coconut palms *Cocos nucifera*. As yet, I have not seen House Crows doing this.

Both species feed largely on the ground or take food from tables at the hotel, but House Crows in particular frequently take berries from a variety of trees, hanging upside down on the thinner branches to obtain the fruit. Pied Crows will eat the flesh of young coconuts on occasion.

#### REFERENCE

GOODWIN, D. 1976. *Crows of the world*. London: British Museum (Nat. Hist.).

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**AN EXPERIMENT TO ATTRACT MIGRATING BIRDS WITH CAR HEADLIGHTS IN THE CHYULU HILLS, KENYA** The large falls of southward migrating Palaearctic birds which occur on misty moonless nights at Ngulia Safari Lodge in Tsavo National Park (West) have been extensively studied for eleven seasons (see, for example, Pearson & Backhurst 1976, Backhurst & Pearson 1977). The powerful north-facing game-viewing lights at the Lodge, situated at about 900m on the eastern side of the Ngulia ridge, sometimes attract and ground thousands of passerine migrants. To see whether a similar phenomenon could be found in the nearby Chyulu Hills, which, like Ngulia, experience regular cloud cover at night during November-December, I experimented with the use of light there on the night of 26/27 November 1979.

The site chosen was at 2000m (much higher than Ngulia Lodge, and some 40km to the northwest), at the southeastern end of the Chylus, where a small road passes about 10m below the top of the ridge, and whence the escarpment falls rapidly away to the northeast. The hills were covered with short grass at this point, with no trees or bushes within 100m, apart from one small *Acacia* no more than 50cm high. On the afternoon of arrival there were no Palaearctic migrants visible in the area, although there had been a scattering of migrants in the Tsavo bushland earlier in the day, and Ngulia had experienced a large fall the previous night.

Cloud appeared all round at night, apparently extending down well below the altitude of the site, but was rather thin above, for stars were frequently visible. When the moon set at 01:00 I parked the vehicle facing northwards, erected a single 12m net about 10m in front of it, near the edge of the escarpment, and switched on the headlights. Immediately one headlight failed, so the experiment had to be continued with only one light.

A few birds appeared through the mist during the first two hours, and some were caught. Between 03:00 and 05:30 many more birds arrived, and in all 52 (45 Palaearctic migrants) were caught and ringed (Table 1).

Some observations were of particular interest. Although the light was shining into the mist towards the north, most birds seemed to come circling down from above. As they entered the mist they began shaking their feathers, so that I always heard them coming. This suggests that these birds were not migrating through the mist, but had been attracted from above it by the diffuse glow produced by the light. A wing-shaking migration through the mist would

be somewhat exhausting. Birds circling down appeared to search for somewhere to land, and many rested in the small *Acacia*; however, most that did not hit the nest flew on quickly again. At first light, all migrants had gone.

TABLE 1

*Birds caught between 01:00 and 05:30, 27 November 1979,  
at 2000 m, Chyulu Hills, Kenya*

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<i>Tyto alba</i> Barn Owl*	1
<i>Coracias garrulus</i> Eurasian Roller	1
<i>Coturnix delegorguei</i> Harlequin Quail*	5
<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i> Laughing Dove*	1
<i>Acrocephalus palustris</i> Marsh Warbler	15
<i>Locustella fluviatilis</i> River Warbler	3
<i>Sylvia communis</i> Whitethroat	15
<i>Luscinia luscinia</i> Sprosser	10
<i>Lanius isabellinus</i> Red-tailed Shrike	1

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\*Ethiopian

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This experiment suggests that, to attract birds, it is necessary simply to illuminate an area beneath mist or cloud above which birds are migrating, and that powerful, far-reaching beams directed towards the birds are not essential. In this connexion, it is of interest that large falls have occasionally occurred at Ngulia in April (see, for example, Britton & Britton 1977), when the birds crossing the ridge from the south must have been attracted by the glow below them, and could not have been influenced by the northward directed beams.

The variety of migrants caught in the Chyulus was similar to that typically encountered in late November at Ngulia; the River Warblers were the first ever recorded in the Chyulus. It was surprising that many of the Whitethroats were very fat; ten of the fifteen caught were rated Fat 3-4 (see Pearson & Backhurst 1976), and weighed 14.5 - 17.5 g. A sample of 25 Whitethroats weighed on the same night at Ngulia were rated Fat 1-2, and nearly all weighed below 15 g (D.J. Pearson, pers. comm.). This might support the suggestion, based on observations at Ngulia, that individuals carrying most fat tend to migrate at a higher altitude (Backhurst & Pearson 1977). However, other species caught in the Chyulus were less fat, and had weights similar to those recorded that night at Ngulia.

Clearly it is possible, with the use of lights, to obtain information on overhead migration at other hilly sites in Kenya, and elsewhere in Africa, where misty conditions coincide with passage periods.

## REFERENCES

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